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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/735,712	12/12/2000	D. Wade Walke	LEX-0109-USA	5587

24231 7590 05/13/2002

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EXAMINER	
LI, RUIXIANG	
ART UNIT	**PAPER NUMBER**
1646	12

DATE MAILED: 05/13/2002

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/735,712	WALKE ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	Ruixiang Li	1646	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1)☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on *09 April 2002* .

2a)☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b)☐ This action is non-final.

3)☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4)☒ Claim(s) *1-4* is/are pending in the application.

4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.

5)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.

6)☒ Claim(s) *1-4* is/are rejected.

7)☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.

8)☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9)☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.

10)☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a)☐ accepted or b)☐ objected to by the Examiner.

Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).

11)☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a)☐ approved b)☐ disapproved by the Examiner.

If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.

12)☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

13)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).

a)☐ All b)☐ Some * c)☐ None of:

1.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.

2.☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____ .

3.☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

14)☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).

a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.

15)☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) _____ .
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). _____ .
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: .

DETAILED ACTION

I. Status of Application, Amendments, and/or Claims

The amendment filed in Paper No. 11 on April 9, 2002 has been entered in full. Claims 1 and 2 have been amended. Claims 1-4 are under consideration.

The text of those sections of Title 35, U.S. Code not included in this action can be found in a prior Office Action.

II. Withdrawn Objections and/or Rejections

The objection to the specification, as set forth at page 2 of the previous Office Action (Paper No. 9, December 6, 2001) has been withdrawn in view of applicants' clarification of the sequence listing.

The rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph for written description, as set forth at pages 6-8 of the previous Office Action (Paper No. 9, December 6, 2001), has been withdrawn in view of applicants' claim amendment.

The rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, as set forth at pages 8-9 of the previous Office Action (Paper No. 9, December 6, 2001), has been withdrawn in view of applicants' claim amendment.

The rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. 102 (b), as set forth at page 9 of the previous Office Action (Paper No. 9, December 6, 2001), has been withdrawn in view of applicants' claim amendment.

III. 35 U.S.C. § 101

The rejection of Claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. 101, as set forth at pages 2-5 of the previous Office Action (Paper No. 9, December 6, 2001), remains.

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 because the claimed invention is not supported by either a credible, specific and substantial asserted utility or a well-established utility. The basis for this rejection is set forth at pages 2-5 of the previous Office Action (Paper No. 9, December 6, 2001).

The applicants' response (Paper No. 11, April 9, 2002; thereinafter "Response") argues that the sequence homology of the deduced amino acid sequence encoded by the claimed nucleic acid with CD20 and IgE receptor that are targets of currently marketed drugs provides the claimed invention a patentable utility (page 3, 2nd paragraph-page 4, 2nd paragraph; page 5, 1st paragraph). This has been fully considered but is not deemed to be persuasive for the following reasons.

35 USC §101 requires disclosure of a specific, substantial, and credible utility. Such a patentable utility has to be a "real world " context of use which does not require significant further research. The instant disclosure asserts that the deduced amino acid sequence encoded by the claimed nucleic acid shares structural similarity with IgE receptor and CD20 (page 15 of the instant disclosure) without revealing the degree of homology. In view of the diversity of structure and functions of the proteins, prediction of function using comparative sequence analysis may lead to the creation and propagation of assignment errors if not performed appropriately (See, Peer Bork and Eugene V. Koonin, Predicting functions from protein sequences--where are the bottlenecks?

Nature Genetics 18:313-318,1998). There are putative seven transmembrane molecules, which do not appear to be coupled to a G protein (Ji et al. G-protein-coupled receptors, *JBC*, 273:17299-17302, 1998). A change of two-amino acid residues in a protein results in switching the binding of the protein from one receptor to another (Yan et al, Science, 290:523-527, 2000). As the applicants are aware, when the degree of homology is low, there is an even greater risk in predicting the functions of proteins solely based upon the sequence homology.

While this examiner recognizes the importance of sequence analysis, the information provided or "predicted" based upon sequence homology can only be used as guidance in determining functions or activities of a molecule by experiments. Any functions predicted based upon the sequence homology will have to be confirmed ultimately by bench work. Such confirmation whether the claimed nucleic acid encodes a CD20 or IgE receptor like molecule requires undue experimentation. See *Brenner v. Manson*, 383 U.S. 519, 148 USPQ 689 (Sup. Ct. 1966), noting that "a patent is not a hunting license. It is not a reward for the search, but compensation for its successful conclusion."

The Response argues that the commercial success based on the use of gene sequences on a gene chip format provides the claimed nucleotide sequence a patentable utility (page 4, 3rd paragraph-page 5, 2nd paragraph). This has been fully considered but is not deemed to be persuasive because commercial success is not an indication of patentability. This is because many products may be commercially successful due to reasons unrelated to the use of the products. For example, a

pharmaceutical company may wish to purchase a putative G-protein coupled receptor on the chance that it may turn out to be a drug target in future, even though determining such possibility requires substantial further experimentation. However, such substantial further experiment is not acceptable for patentable utiity. In the instant case, substantial further experiment is required to define the ligand(s) and functions of the claimed protein and to confirm whether theclaimed protein actually functions like CD20 or IgE receptor. Since the disclosure does not reveal any activity/functions of the nucleotide sequence or the protein encoded by the nucleotide sequence, one skilled in the art would not know how to use the claimed invention. In other words, how can an artisan use the claimed sequence in a gene chip format without knowing functions of claimed molecules?

The Response argues that the claimed polynucleotide sequences provide biological validated empirical data and thus meets the utility requirement of 35 U.S.C. § 101 (page 6, 2nd paragraph). This has been fully considered but is not deemed to be persuasive. While the examiner agrees with the applicants on the scientific value of the claimed nucleotide sequences and on the significance of expressed sequence information in the structural analysis of genomic data, the information or biological validated empirical data provided in the disclosure are research uses only to determine functions of the molecules. What is valuable scientifically as a promising discovery does not automatically indicate that the discovery is patentable in the instant application. Because the protein encoded by the claimed nucleic acids has a sequence similar to CD20 or IgE receptor, obviously further research would have been required to

determine the usefulness of the protein. Thus, the biological validated empirical data provided by the claimed polynucleotide sequences argued in the Response are not considered a utility acceptable under 35 USC 101.

The Response argues that persons of skilled in the art, as well as thousand of venture capitalists and investors, readily recognize the utility, both scientific and commercial, of human genomic data (page 6, 1st paragraph) and that the usefulness of the claimed nucleic acid molecules is substantial and credible and well-established (page 5, 3rd paragraph). This has been fully considered but is not deemed to be persuasive because the disclosure has failed to provide any information on whether the proteins encoded by the claimed nucleic acids actually function like CD20 or IgE receptor receptor. Without knowing biological functions of the claimed molecules, one of skilled in the art would not know what to do with the claimed invention. Certainly, human genomic data have both scientific and commercial value. However, the commercial value does not simply render the claimed invention a specific, substantial, and credible utility, and the general utility of human genomic information does not simply render the claimed nucleic acid sequences a well-established utility.

In summary, the disclosure fails to provide a specific, substantial, and credible utility, or a well-established utility.

IV. Claim Rejections Under 35 U. S. C. § 112, 1st Paragraph

Claims 1-4 are rejected under 35 U. S. C. § 112, 1st paragraph. Specifically, since the claimed invention is not supported by either a specific, substantial, and credible

utility, or a well-established utility, one skilled in the art clearly would not know how to use the claimed invention. The basis for this rejection is set forth at pages 2-5 of the previous Office Action (Paper No. 9, December 6, 2001).

The applicants' arguments about the patentable utility of the claimed invention has been fully considered but is not deemed to be persuasive for reason set for the above.

V. Claim Rejections Under 35 U. S. C. § 112, 2nd Paragraph

The rejection of Claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph, as set forth at pages 8-9 of the previous Office Action (Paper No. 9, December 6, 2001), remains.

Claim 2 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, 2nd paragraph because it is indefinite. Claim 2 recites "under highly stringent conditions", but without giving the specific conditions in the claim. Neither the specification nor the relevant literature provides an unambiguous definition for the term.

VI. Conclusion

No claims are allowed.

Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not

mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Ruixiang Li whose telephone number is (703) 306-0282. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-5:00 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Yvonne Eyler, can be reached on (703) 308-6564. The fax phone number for this Group is (703) 305-3014 or (703) 308-4242.

Communications via Internet e-mail regarding this application, other than those under 35 U.S.C. 132 or which otherwise require a signature, may be used by the applicant and should be addressed to [yvonne.eyler@uspto.gov].

All Internet e-mail communications will be made of record in the application file. PTO employees do not engage in Internet communications where there exists a possibility that sensitive information could be identified or exchanged unless the record includes a properly signed express waiver of the confidentiality requirements of 35 U.S.C. 122. This is more clearly set forth in the Interim Internet Usage Policy published in the Official Gazette of the Patent and Trademark on February 25, 1997 at 1195 OG 89.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the Group receptionist whose telephone number is (703) 308-0196.

Elizabeth C. Kemmerer

Ruixiang Li
Examiner
May 7, 2002

ELIZABETH KEMMERER
PRIMARY EXAMINER